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## Amnesty Group Includes Gays

Amnesty International has extended its "Prisoners of Conscience" category to include violations against homosexuals, according to the international Gay Association in Dublin. Amnesty International, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts in monitoring human rights violations around the world, will now regularly monitor and report violations of Gay rights by local and national governments throughout the world.

Edmund Lynch, Information Secretary of the IGA, cautioned that Amnesty's policy change will not cover such cases as lewd solicitation convictions. He said that Amnesty International would construe its "Prisoners of Conscience" category narrowly.

The highly publicized executions of Gay men in Iran, as well as lesser publicized conditions of homosexuals in the Soviet Union, are thought to have been decisive in Amnesty International's policy reassessment. An estimated twelve men have been executed in Teheran for their alleged homosexual behavior since the Khomeini regime came to power.

In Russia, male homosexual acts are punishable with confinement of up to five years. Male homosexual acts that are the result of force or where one of the parties is a minor are punished with imprisonment of up to eight years. The Soviet courts have also applied the code to an individual's mere homosexuality, irrespective of any sexual activity.

Amnesty International is particularly interested in one case where a young Leningrad poet was sentenced to four years in a Soviet labor camp for writing poems about his love for another man. Since beginning his sentence in 1976, the poet, Gennady Trifonov, has succeeded in smuggling to the West first-hand accounts of inhumane treatment of Gay men by prison guards and other inmates.

## Ayatollah Condemns Gays

Iran — The Ayatollah Khomeini recently told an Italian journalist that the Iranian government he heads denies that homosexuals have any rights whatsoever.

In an interview with Oriana Fallaci, published in the New York Times, the Ayatollah vowed "to eliminate corruption." This includes the execution of known or suspected homosexuals.

To Fallaci's question whether it is right to shoot a poor prostitute or a woman who is unfaithful to her husband or a man who loves another man, the religious leader replied:

"If your finger suffers from gangrene, what do you do? Do you let the whole hand, and then the body, become filled with gangrene, or do you cut the finger off? What brings corruption to an entire country and its people must be pulled up like weeds that infest a field of wheat. I know there are societies where women are permitted to give themselves to satisfy the desire of men who are not their husbands, and where men are permitted to give themselves to satisfy other men's desires. But the society we want to build does not permit such things. In Islam we want to purify society, and in order to achieve this aim we must punish those who bring evil to our youth."

Fallaci said, "What about the boy shot for sodomy?" Khomeini's reply was: "We have to eliminate corruption."

When the interviewer pressed him on the violations of the human rights of gays and unfaithful wives, the Ayatollah said, "What do I know about particulars? . . . Ask the court that condemned (a woman). Stop talking about these things. I am getting tired. These are not important matters."

The man who controls the destiny of millions further stated: "If you foreigners do not understand, too bad for you. It's none of your business, you have nothing to do with our choices. If some Iranians don't understand it, too bad for them. It means they have not understood Islam."

A secret revolutionary court in Hamedan, Iran recently tried and executed Houssein Amiri, described as the leader of a group of homosexuals. The group, the "Yellow Scorpions," were accused of raping several boys.

## National News

### Documentary Cancelled

New York — The much publicized ABC News special on Gays, scheduled to air October 11, was pre-empted at the last moment by the World Series.

The special "ABC News Closeup — Homosexuals," was cancelled after rain forced the October 10 game between the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Baltimore Orioles to be delayed for one day.

Sources at ABC say the special may not be aired for some time, perhaps as long as a year, because of trouble with sponsors. Local stations reported difficulty selling local advertising spots during the program and at least three stations had declined to air the program — an unusual occurrence for a news documentary.

ABC, for its part, had heavily publicized the documentary, with ads in local papers. *TV Guide* and *Time*. According to the *D.C. Blade*, Gay activists who previewed the special had given it mixed ratings. Some said the program focused too excessively on the turmoil of Gay life, while others felt the program achieved an overall balance.

### Anti-discrimination

In a recent letter to U.S. Senators, Patsy T. Mink, president of Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), one of the nation's largest liberal political/lobby groups, urged support for legislation which Sen. Paul Tsongas (D-Ma) plans to introduce. (See previous issue) That legislation will seek to prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation.

Mink's letter stated, in part, "The principle that employment should not be based on irrelevant criteria such as race, creed, color, etc, but rather on ability to do the job, is well-established. The inclusion of 'sexual orientation' is a logical extension of this principle. ADA strongly urges your co-sponsorship of the proposed fair employment legislation."

### Honorable Discharges For Gays

The deadline is January 1, 1980 for persons with less than honorable discharges from the military for being gay to have their discharges confidentially and automatically upgraded to honorable.

According to Gay Community News, a little publicized law (PL 9526) waives until January 1, 1980, the usual 15-year limit on the time a veteran has to appeal a less than honorable discharge.

Under new regulations adopted since 1978, persons separated from the military for being gay now typically receive honorable discharges.

A brochure entitled "Upgrading Gay and Lesbian Veteran Discharges" can be obtained by writing:

Gay Civil Rights Chapter  
American Civil Liberties Union  
633 S. Shatto Place  
Los Angeles, CA 90005

### Methodist Decide

The United Methodist Church's highest judicial body has upheld the appointment of a homosexual pastor to one of the denomination's churches.

In an announcement made in Washington on November 1st, the Judicial Council - in effect the Supreme Court of the 10 million member denomination - ruled every United Methodist minister "in good standing and in effective relation" annual conference is eligible for appointment, church officials said in a statement.